BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

ART. XV.—*Transactions of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, at its Seventh Annual Session, begun and held in the City of Montgomery, Jan.* 10–12, 1854. 8vo. pp. 190.

Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania, at its Annual Session, held in the City of Pottsville, May, 1854. Vol. IV. Published by the Society. 8vo. pp. 171.

Transactions of the Medical Association of Southern Central New York, at the Eighth Annual Meeting, held at Homer, June, 1854. 8vo. pp. 120.

Transactions of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Medical Society of the State of North Carolina, held at Raleigh, N. C., May, 1854. 8vo. pp. 97.

THE annual volumes of *Transactions* issued by the several State Medical Societies we have always looked upon as publications of very great interest. Although the reports embraced in them may be, occasionally, commonplace or superficial; although the facts they record may not always be detailed with sufficient fulness and precision, nor examined with proper care in all their bearings and correct relations; and although, too often, undue space may be given to matters of mere speculation or of little value, while those of primary importance are overlooked or carelessly treated, still, we never fail to find embodied in these *Transactions* observations of great value, calculated to correct, confirm, or enlarge our views in relation to the etiology, character, and proper treatment of the diseases incident to the several sections of our country, or which prevail among the different classes of its population.

1. We have examined with a very great degree of satisfaction the reports and papers constituting the published *Transactions of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama,* at its last annual session; all of them are replete with interest, while several are particularly valuable.

The session was opened by an address from the President of the Association, Dr. A. Denny, "On the Magnitude of Science, or a Contrast between the three Learned Professions." The style of this address is perhaps too rhetorical, as well for the subject discussed as for the character of the assembly addressed. Many of the bold expressions of the speaker are liable to be misunderstood; they will lead some to attribute to him sentiments which he certainly never meant to inculcate.

The annual oration of Dr. A. Lopez is an address of a very different character from that of Dr. Denny. Its subject is an important and interesting one: "The Mutual Relations that should exist between the Representatives of a Commonwealth and its Medical Men;" or, in other words, the necessary cooperation of the sciences of legislation and of medicine for the promotion of the common weal. With commendable dignity, and in clear and energetic language, Dr. Lopez urges upon the attention of legislators the necessity in every State of a body of well-instructed physicians, not merely to minister to such of its citizens as may be overtaken by disease or suffer from accidental violence, but, by their professional knowledge and skill, to aid the legislature in the enactment of laws having for their object the protection of the health and the promotion of the vigour, comfort, and general well-being of the entire community; to assist the officers of justice in the detection of guilt and the protection of the innocent; and to render efficient the efforts of the philanthropist to diminish crime, pauperism, and suffering. In consequence of the important services thus rendered by the physician to the community at large, Dr. Lopez insists upon it as the duty of the legislature to do everything in their power to promote medical education, and to protect the legitimate members of the profession from the encroachments of ignorant pretenders, and of charlatans of every class and description.

The following extracts will give to our readers some idea of the manner in which Dr. Lopez enforces the claims of the medical profession upon the attention of what should be the ever-vigilant conservator of the people's best interests—an enlightened legislature:—

"The progress of science, and consequently of truth, cannot fail to impress the reasoning man with the conviction, that degenerating influences are reflected upon the intellectual integrity of communities, accordingly as their physical organization improves or deteriorates. Not only intellectual, but also moral character feels the injury which a defective physique imparts. History attests this truth, medical history corroborates the assertion; and the world's chart, with its multiplied statistics, presents daily to every government interested in the inquiry, causes to show how necessary it has become to legislate by acts that 'grasp beyond a grain, and look beyond an hour.' Nor can governments be deaf to the call of reason, or blind to the evidences of political revolution. The bureaus of census and registration, inquiries into sanitary laws, and commissions of health, are daily growing into importance among nations; and the affinity of the parish pauper with the parish sick, create the thought, how much the last two influences the others, as correlative causes of much that bears upon their external as well as internal safety.

"Hence, you must infer that the *people's health constitutes the people's safety*. I desire you to give this a latitudinous construction. It is not alone the health of an individual, but of a generation. It is not an isolated disability, ending with the victim of its attack, but extending through a mysterious series of hereditary transmissibility to every collateral branch of society, in the present, and for the time to come.

"Permit me, therefore, Gentlemen Representatives, to invite your serious thoughts to how much you should be committed in the encouragement and protection of every measure that can rouse up and foster in your State a well-educated, moral, and scientific corps of professional men, to whose skill and care you can confide the well-being of her citizens. Ask yourselves, whether it be be prudent and wise to adopt a policy that retards their advancement, discourages their efforts, and represses the spirit that should prompt them, rather than throw your buckler between them and sinister influences, deeply calculated to operate as fatally upon yourselves and your constituents as upon a profession whose object is exalted, and whose utility is unquestioned.

"There is scarcely an electric flash that pulsates along those winged messengers, momently flying through space, from one continent to another, that does not tell how sensibly alive are the nations of the earth to the great problem of human life. How is its percentage established? what constitutes the bases of your life insurances? or, how test the acumen of your political economists? Surely, by the reliability that you can place upon those who are not only called upon to testify in cases of doubt, but who also have in their keeping the preservation and fortifying of those sanitary conditions by which the citizen is qualified to do service to his government; by perpetuating and transmitting a healthy and vigorous race into her commonwealth; by guarding her against the incubus of pauperism, vagrancy, and mendicity, which drain her resources, disorganize her morals, and disgrace her estate; by preserving intact, through healthy physical organization, the intelligence of her subjects, and filling her stations of power and dignity with moral aliment, rather than crowding her hospitals and jails with the unseen, though certain consequences of depraved and ruined constitutions. Would you understand this?—ill health, with ruined or unsound constitutions, begets inability to labour, destitution, desperation. Upon these follow temptation, crime, contempt of law, insanity, death by self-immolation, and consequently, impoverishment and debility of the body politic.

"This is no fancy sketch, pleading for a profession that has emerged from its long infancy, and now feels its own strength in the consciousness of a well-earned reputation; but figures and statistics verify my statements. They prove that in proportion as a provident legislature invests qualified persons with all things pertaining to sanitary and hygienic regulations—to the extent that it works consentaneously with the profession most conversant with requisitions for the public health, and upholds its members by its strong arm and liberal interpretation, closing the door against dangerous and untutored men, so far will it accomplish its highest duty, and so much will it enhance the obligation under which it lays its citizens."

"Does the statesman seek to thread the labyrinth of human progress; the lawgiver ask for light upon the dark and hidden phases of natural laws; or municipal power grope in vain for guidance when pestilence and death overshadow the land? Who is it that elucidates and instructs? It is the scientific physician, whose eye no form visible eludes; from whose ear no sound audible escapes; beneath whose hand the mystic law resolves itself into shape, and in whose crucible of untiring exploration, elements apparently indivisible are simplified and distinguished. The forest and the cave, the ocean and the air, things animate and inanimate, yield up their properties at his behest; and their most recondite virtues are by his knowledge brought forth, that man should triumph over pain."

"With what are we not in close alliance wherever the cause of man can be served, his woes assuaged, his condition meliorated? Jurisprudence calls us to its aid; crime can elude the call for justice where the means of detection are confined to legal phraseology, or to human laws, indicating and defining punishment according to testimony. But evidence erected upon human fallibility, discordant statements, the workings of prejudice, revenge, or misconstruction, might fail in justice and in mercy. Innocence might satiate the avenging law, guilt escape its desert, *if there was no surer road to truth.* Under whose touch, then, shall the door of the temple, wherein sits truth enshrined, be opened? Where is the tongue that never lies?—where the accuser and the witness, beneath whose unflinching and irresistible gaze the man of crime stands abashed, and by whose revelations he stands condemned? The *knife*, the *microscope*, the *crucible*—these bring their labours to the courts of justice, and throw them into the common inquest: and yet, the knife of the scientific explorer, which gives to the dead this tongue of truth—the tests of the laboratory, which convert the lifeless mass and its incongruous contents into a living oracle, to confront crime, and pronounce the murderer's doom, are never confided to other hands than ours. It is *medical science that directs that tongue and that eye;* and the *lex non scripta* of the book of nature explains what to the *lex scripta* would be a hidden light."

"The medical man of science allays the wide-spread panic when affrighted cities seek his counsel; and his dictum, like oil upon the troubled waters, calms those hasty outbreaks of popular impulse, so frequently subversive of the best interests of commerce. Social order, in all its bearings, receives the benefit of his judgment, and through his acquirements and moral influence public quiet is insured. But should doubt give way to sad reality, and the dark cloud, portentous with coming woe, threaten to cover the city with its funeral pall, to whom do the people fly for prevention and for preservation? The scientific physician is again at the helm, and dictates the police by which the blow may be either averted, or, if it must fall, shorn of its severity. Passing from the anticipation to the advent of the disease, and you find the medical profession at its post. With it, all distinction is levelled, all appeals equalized. The voice of squalid misery rings the alarm at the portals of its conscience as loudly as the proffered gold of the man of wealth, and as readily is it answered. His benevolence sees no duty save in the exercise of a common charity; his humanity requires no other stimulus than the stricken and the afflicted. For them he braves the lurid heat; he breathes the pestilential vapour; for them he is deaf to the strong appeals of self-preservation, until, alas! too often the shaft averted by his own skill from its fatal destination to another's heart, strikes, in its rebound, the envenomed barb to his own life-blood."

But it is time for us to turn our attention to the reports from the different counties of Alabama embraced in the volume before us. They differ in interest, and in the completeness and value of the facts they communicate; they are all, nevertheless, replete with interest, and will amply repay an attentive perusal.

From the report on the diseases of Line Creek, Montgomery County, we quote the following remarks of Dr. M. G. Merriwether on the treatment of rheumatism. In several very severe cases of the acute form of this disease we have ourselves prescribed, after bleeding, and the full evacuation of the bowels, infusion of the cinchona bark with the most decidedly beneficial results. What Dr. M. says in regard to oleaginous inunction is deserving of attention.

"There were several cases of acute rheumatism. I am satisfied that the quinia treatment is the best possible in this climate. I treat a case of acute rheumatism as I would an attack of bilious remittent fever; that is, so far as regards the constitutional treatment of the two diseases. Calomel and Dover's powder, followed by quinia and Dover's powder, in full doses, will quickly arrest rheumatic fever. That this should be so is not surprising, since it is a well-established fact, that there is not, in the whole materia medica, a remedy so efficacious in subduing inflammation, as calomel in combination with opium, in some of its various preparations." "As a local application in rheumatism, I have the limb rubbed with volatile liniment, with gum camphor—oil of turpentine and laudanum in it—and then have it swathed with flannel. I should like to call the attention of physicians to the importance of oleaginous inunction as a hygienic measure, and to its curative effects in all chronic diseases." "To restore the healthy condition of the skin, there is nothing so good as to have it rubbed with a little oil—animal oils are the best, as they are more penetrating, and do not dry up so quickly. Personal cleanliness is necessary to health, but after a liberal application of soap and water to the body, a little oil should be applied to supply the natural oil of the skin." "The ancient Jews, Greeks, and Romans, who probably excelled modern nations in longevity, applied oil to the skin after every bath. The costly ointments spoken of in ancient history, both sacred and profane, were oils highly perfumed. It would be well for the people of our day to follow the example of the ancients in this particular. It was stated when the cholera was in France in 1832, that no one who was engaged as an oil-porter took the disease. Dr. Simpson, of Edinburgh, states that the operatives in the woollen factories in Glasgow are not subject to cholera and tubercular consumption, owing to the fact that the large amount of oil employed in the manufacture of woollens keeps the hands almost reeking with oil. Dr. Tilt, of England, in an article on hygiene, states that when King Augustus asked a centegenarian how he retained his health to such an advanced age, the latter replied: 'I apply oil to my skin, and mead to my stomach.'

"In all chronic diseases the skin is more or less affected; it loses the natural oil so necessary to keep it pliant, and permeable to the escape of perspiration. In all fevers, also, of a low grade, it is very necessary to apply oil to the skin. In typhoid fever, it is an excellent remedy; it should be applied every day, and every third day the whole surface should be sponged over with strong lye of wood ashes before reapplying the oil; the lye should be warm."

Of the remedial properties of the *veratrum viride* in pneumonia, we find the following favourable account given by Dr. W. H. Anderson, in the report on the diseases of Mobile. Speaking of the prevalent diseases during the first quarter of the year, he remarks:—

"Pleurisy and pneumonia were quite frequent, and the latter was often severe. We cannot say, however, that the mortality was any greater than common." "The veratrum viride, which enjoyed some reputation the previous winter in the treatment of pneumonia, was again tried, and lost none of its laurels. It was regarded by some of our leading physicians as a most valuable remedy, powerful and immediate in its effects, and quite heroic in its nature. It never failed to reduce the pulse to as low a standard as could be desired, and to make an impression on the disease in its active stage highly desirable to both physician and patient. Experience still proved, however, that the utmost caution was necessary in its administration, and that the patients subjected to it should be always under the eye of the physician or of an intelligent nurse. In several instances extreme prostration followed its use in the medium dose, and great apprehension was caused for the recovery of the patient. We believe, however, that it never proved fatal in a single instance. Your reporter administered to a child, twelve months old, a single drop, and in the course of an hour, so incessant was the vomiting, and so great the prostration, that he was compelled to resort to a powerful stimulant to prevent the little patient from sinking entirely."

Of the effects of the veratrum viride in typhoid fever, Dr. Anderson speaks as follows:—

"Typhoid fever was more prevalent than it was the previous winter; and, from all accounts, was more easily managed. The veratrum viride did not exercise the influence over this disease claimed for it by some of the practitioners of the interior, and of other States. In the hands of several physicians with us, its effects were not appreciable. Others thought it a remedy of some value, though of doubtful use after the third week of the disease. Your reporter administered it in perhaps a dozen cases, but never pushed it to its full extent. He was satisfied that it often acted beneficially, and would not, with his present experience, like to treat a case of typhoid fever without occasionally making use of the remedy in its minimum doses.

"We doubt very much whether the typhoid fever that occurs in Mobile is accompanied with as much abdominal derangement as appears to be the case in many other places. There is certainly a good deal of meteorism, but the ilio-cœcal region cannot be so gravely implicated as it often is in the Northern States, and on the continent of Europe. We have seen many cases run their course, and end in recovery or death, without any undue tenderness in the right iliac region, and we have examined several cases after death, when no lesion of consequence was found among the patches of Peyer. Another reason that lends value to our position is, that hemorrhages from the bowels are rare, even in those cases that end in death. The degree of *tenderness* on continued pressure in the ilio-cœcal region, is a very good index to the amount of ulceration within, and we should like to know from physicians, practising in those localities where the disease is so deadly, in what proportion of cases there is much tenderness and trouble in that region. We cannot help thinking that the reason why the disease is so seldom fatal here, is because there is so little dangerous ulceration of this portion of the bowels."

Dr. J. W. Crawford, in the report on the diseases of Centerville, presents his experience of the veratrum viride in fevers generally. He states that, during the past year, he used Norwood's tincture somewhat extensively, and, he thinks, with decided benefit in most cases. "That," he remarks, "it will control the action of the heart to any reasonable extent, and this without much inconvenience from its nauseating effects, my experience with it teaches me; and I am satisfied that it also reduces the heat of the surface, in fevers, more quickly than any other remedy with which I am acquainted—cold water excepted—and that, too, without nausea or much reduction of the pulse. I have, also, in three or four instances where it was the remedy relied on, seen the tongue become clean, the mind clear, and all the symptoms improve, the patient becoming rapidly convalescent, where, from observation in such cases of other remedies, I did not expect it. I have not given it in either intermittent or remittent fevers, being fearful of increasing the tendency these always have to gastric irritability. In two cases of fever, one an adult and the other twelve years of age, both proving fatal, I discontinued it after the second dose, owing to the excessive nausea in the case of the adult, and to prostration without vomiting in the child. To the adult thirteen drops, and to the child seven were given, in two doses each. I am not prepared to say that the fatal result was in either case attributable to the remedy—indeed, my conviction is, that it was not; but neither *perfectly* recovered from the prostration which I attributed to the medicine."

The estimate of the remedial virtues of the veratrum viride formed by the authors of other of the reports contained in this same volume of *Transactions* is by no means so favourable as that of the gentleman whose testimony is given above. Thus, Dr. J. C. Marks, in the report on the diseases of Selma, presents the details of an attack of pneumonia treated by the veratrum viride, of which he was himself the subject, and remarks that—

"This case, we think, will show, and equally others which we could adduce bearing upon the same point, that while it—the veratrum—reduces and controls the pulse—the arterial circulation—and sickens a man, even to indifference of life, it yet, in very many instances, exerts no curative influence over disease—does not remove the essential conditions, whatever they may be."

In the report on the diseases of Sumterville and vicinity, Dr. L. H. Anderson presents some very interesting remarks on the character and treatment of pneumonia, as it occurs in South Alabama. The following are the general conclusions to which he has been led by his personal observations.

"1. The pneumonia of South Alabama is probably less severe than the same disease in more northern latitudes; and the intermittent or remittent fever accompanying it is more dangerous than the pulmonary inflammation.

"2. The treatment should be directed chiefly against the malarious element of the disease. Quinia should be freely given for its antiperiodic effect, and mercury for its influence on the secretions, particularly that of the liver.

"3. An exception to this pathological treatment is to be made when the attending fever is of a typhoid character. Here the dothinenterite is the more important disease, and the pneumonia should be treated with strict reference to it."

The treatment of the yellow fever as it occurred in Alabama during the year 1853, is very fully discussed by Dr. J. C. Marks, in the report on the diseases of Selma. Of bloodletting he remarks—he is speaking of the violent forms of the disease attended by "extensive and dangerous congestion." "Venesection exerted the happiest effects in every case, whether employed by myself or others, in which its use was restricted to the form of the disease under consideration, and the robust constitution. Indeed, we know of no remedy whose immediate and necessary influence over the essential pathological state better fits it for such cases, especially in their early stages; and we confess ourselves at a loss to conceive how such a weapon of successful conflict with so terrible a disease could have fallen into disrepute, save only from an indiscriminate resort to it, in mild or low forms, and weak and enfeebled constitutions, or the failure to follow up and perpetuate its good effects over the congestion by the prompt and judicious exhibition of the *great remedy*, whose action in turn it so much favours."

Dr. Marks here alludes to mercury, some form of which, he remarks, was prescribed in every case; and of all the curative means employed, it was deemed the most reliable. It was customary, he tells us, to precede the use of the mercury, at least when given with a view to its constitutional effects, by cathartics, the warm bath, or bloodletting, or all of these remedies, for the purpose of removing to a certain extent the congested condition of the organs, and thus preparing the system for the prompt absorption of the mercury, and by this means securing its full effect.

"By some," he continues, "the opprobrium has been made to rest upon mercury, that it is incompetent to the relief of aggravated cases; that these will march on to a fatal issue in defiance of the remedy. We believe the source of this stigma to reside chiefly in the culpable neglect of physicians to employ a preparatory treatment, such as will insure its specific action upon the system. Despite that other irrational and illogical dogma which we also now sometimes hear, that even in such cases where the constitutional effects of mercury are obtained, it is more than probable recovery would have ensued without it, we hazard the remark, that there is no remedy known to medical science the rationale of whose therapeutic action so adapts it to the cure of the disease under consideration, especially in its more violent forms. It exerts a powerful influence on the pathological condition, and removes the congestion through an increase of the secretions, and a permanent stimulant impression upon the capillaries. It is evident, then, that the great desideratum must be in the adoption of such measures as will insure its absorption and permanent specific effect upon the system, without which, of course, its use can be of little or no avail. Let physicians studiously seek the attainment of this end, and we must believe that many of the terrors that now wait upon the disease will soon be no more."

"As before intimated, we generally commenced the mercurial treatment, for its specific effects, soon after the operation of our purgative, or the employment of other preparatory measures, and by the exhibition of calomel in small and divided doses. The quantity prescribed was usually about two grains, combined with from two to three grains of quinia and one-eighth grain of morphia, which was repeated every two or three hours, as circumstances seemed to require. It was continued in this manner until salivation was produced, after which we in no case witnessed anything but the happiest results."

"We did not, in this form of the fever, prescribe the quinia, in the large doses which have been recommended, to cut short the attack, because it was not regarded sufficiently paroxysmal in its nature to allow of such a result. By a few physicians, however, this was attempted to be done with the remedy; but no success of consequence, I believe, was achieved. The morphia, when it failed to quiet and allay pain in the doses prescribed with the calomel, was given in larger quantities alone for that object."

"Cups and blisters were, in the early stages, sometimes employed over the stomach and spine as revulsives, and frequently effected the removal of vomiting, as well as determined to the surface. The cups were occasionally applied to the temples and nucha when the head symptoms became troublesome. Sinapisms were not unfrequently used over the region of the liver, and sometimes applied to the extremities.

"In addition to quinia and morphia, which were employed as stimulants through the disease, in the manner mentioned, it frequently became necessary, in the latter stages, to resort to some of the more direct remedies of this class, and we found ammoniated milk punch and port wine, or the oil of turpentine, with ether, spirits of lavender and camphor water, as recommended in a recent number of the *London Lancet*, to meet as near as possible the indication."

Of the "quinia treatment" of yellow fever, Dr. Anderson, in the report on the diseases of Mobile, speaks as follows:—

"With due deference to the opinion of several highly respectable physicians, who oppose what is called the Quinia treatment, we must give our testimony as decidedly in its favour. This treatment was much used in this city. Your reporter and his associate in practice being much prejudiced in its favour, from the experience of former years, used it from the very commencement of the epidemic to its close. They treated upwards of eleven hundred cases; and, without claiming any superiority in success, they feel sure that their tables of mortality will compare favourably with those of any other physicians in the city. They used quinia in almost every case, regardless of age, sex, idiosyncrasy, or any other circumstance. They have every reason to be pleased with their manner of treatment, and, with their present experience, would not exchange it for any other that they have heard of. The marked and almost magic effect of a large dose of quinia at the outset was so apparent, that they should have considered it little short of trifling with human life to have adopted any other treatment. They will not deny that there were cases in which it did no good; in fact, in those cases where there was at the commencement decided congestion of the brain, it may sometimes have done harm; but such cases were very few, and could hardly have been aggravated by any medicine that could be given."

The quinia was, however, never trusted to alone; it was always given in combination with calomel or blue mass. The quinia, we are assured, had a powerful influence in allaying nausea and vomiting. Very often, on a first visit, the patient would be found with a distressing sick stomach, which was "immediately relieved by a large dose of quinia and calomel."

Dr. Anderson believes that the yellow fever, as it prevailed in Mobile during the past year, was contagious; "as much so as smallpox, or any other disease that we know of."

"Within our own experience," he says, "we could enumerate more than one dozen families, that were isolated from the disease, and escaped until late in the season, but took it within a few days after some transient person came into the family, either sick with the disease, or on the eve of being down with it. If such cases occurred only in one or two families, we might pause and doubt; but they happened so often, and under such circumstances, that we cannot attribute them to anything else but absolute contagion. We have heard the arguments of others, whose capacity for observation we have the highest respect for; but they have failed to convince us that the fever did not spread in *many* families by contagion." "A family living eight miles from Mobile, in a healthy pine country, has no communication with the city, and remains in perfect health until the middle of October. About this time, a stranger arrives, just from the city; he is seized with the fever, and in a week from that time four or five of the family are taken down, and half the number dead with black vomit."

Startling as these facts may at first sight appear, they cannot be received as conclusive evidence of the contagiousness of yellow fever. To determine their full and true bearing upon the question at issue, there are a number of collateral circumstances to be taken into account, of which Dr. A. has left us in entire ignorance, that, we are convinced, would materially change their etiological import.

Dr. Marks, in his report on the diseases of Selma, bears very different testimony on the question of the contagion of yellow fever to that of Dr. A. He assures us that—

"There was nothing in the history of the epidemic that could, by the most favoured construction, be made to support the opinion of the contagionists; but, on the contrary, everything was presented that could be desired to confute and overthrow it."

"It has long," he further remarks, "been a vexed and contested question, whether, between yellow fever and our ordinary periodic fevers, there be not an identity of cause; or, in other words, whether the same local conditions which engender intermittent and remittent fevers, may not also originate yellow fever. Now, connected with the origin of yellow fever here, there are some circumstances which seem to favour such a view, while other reasons and facts stand in opposition. It is well known that, while yellow fever generally prevails where periodic fevers are common, yet that it occurs only at long intervals or on rare occasions, and is not usually produced when the causes engendering endemic fevers are in operation. If, then, it be produced by them at all, it must be when they become exceedingly active and powerful. Now, in the present instance, before the conclusion of an identity of cause can, we conceive, be logically deduced, we must prove, not only that the ordinary causes of intermittents and remittents, such as malarial influences, hygrometric conditions, &c., were much concentrated and intensified ere yellow fever manifested itself, but, also, that a similar concentration obtained at other places where it prevailed. Should we be incapable of doing this, we are forced to admit a new, and, as we have called it, atmospheric condition, as alone requisite to its production, or at least conspiring with and aiding the common causes of fever.

"We think we may show that there was some concentration of our endemic causes here, at the time yellow fever appeared, as exhibited not only by the greater violence and malignancy of our common periodic fevers, but also from the prolific source of malarial emanations in our midst. We had at that time a general pulling down and upsetting of old filth-incrusted houses, and, besides, a great deal of dirt and decayed vegetable matter thrown up in our streets, especially the one bordering on the river, along which were several large buildings in the course of erection, and to obtain a foundation for which extensive excavations were made; thus, in different ways, exposing to the desiccating and evaporating action of the sun, old pestiferous decomposing matters, which had accumlated in the city for years. Now, while the impure malarial air, in this way engendered, has long been regarded as a fruitful source of disease, and even of yellow fever, yet, as we have every reason to believe the disease occurred at other places where no such agencies, nor even other causes of concentration were present, we cannot conclude that our ordinary causes of fever, heightened as they were, alone produced it, and are, therefore, led to the conviction that an atmospheric epidemic influence of some kind was, if not essential, certainly accessary in its development."

An able and valuable report on goitre, by William Taylor, of Talladega, is replete with interesting facts in regard to the particular localities in Alabama, in which that affection is endemic.

So far as his own observation extends, and so far as he has been able to obtain information from others, Dr. T. has found goitre to prevail to a much greater extent in the silurian and metamorphic regions of the State, than in other portions of it; and that, while it prevails in the silurian districts to a greater extent than can be readily accounted for by sporadic causes, it prevails to a still much greater degree, in point of frequency, in the metamorphic districts.

"But," remarks Dr. T., "it does not appear that goitre is found alike in all parts comprised in the metamorphic system. In Talladega, the disease does not seem to prevail to so great an extent in the metamorphic region of the country as in some parts of the silurian; while in parts of Randolph County, which is wholly metamorphic, it is becoming so prevalent as to demand the serious attention of the profession. In Fishhead Valley, in Randolph, where the disease is, perhaps, as prevalent as in any other part of the county, much of the water, on standing, precipitates a deposit of mica, similar to what I saw in the water-vessels at Mindereri and Masaya (South America). Yet I do not hold that this agent has any influence, either negative or positive, in producing the complaint, although I have never seen it prevalent, except in the older systems. This fact holds true, so far as my own limited observation extends on this continent, and I doubt not but the same holds with regard to the old world. I have interrogated several intelligent Englishmen in regard to the goitrous districts of England, all of whom tell me that the shires of Nottingham, York, and Derby are metamorphic in their geological aspect, and abound in mica. But if, as M. Chatin reasons, goitre is dependent on the absence of iodine in the water, then the absence or presence of mica becomes a mere adventitous coincidence. Indeed, I would not pretend to assert that mica had any direct agency in producing goitre, but merely mention it in connection with the disease; because I believe there is as much ground for assigning it as the cause of the malady, as there is for attributing it to lime, magnesia, and divers agents, to whose influence it has, at different times, been charged. And if future observation and experience should confirm the suggestions and reasoning of M. Chatin, then will goitre and the more primary systems be found to have a relative connection, because little iodine is found in these systems, while it is more liberally diffused throughout the more recent formations. In other words, we may expect to find the disease confined principally to the older formations; while, on the other hand, it will rarely be found occurring in systems of more recent origin."

"From facts, the causes of which are as yet unexplained, there are reasons for supposing that the metamorphic formation offers a more prolific field for the production of goitre than the purely primitive; since it is a remarkable fact that countries where goitre prevails to any considerable extent, are decidedly metamorphic. In the central Swiss Alps, notorious throughout the world for the production of goitre and cretenism, Sir Charles Lyell asserts, 'the primary fossiliferous, and older secondary formations disappear, and the cretaceous, oolitic, and liassic strata graduate insensibly into metamorphic rocks, consisting of granular limestone, talc-schist, talcose gneiss, micaceous schist, and other varieties.' This condition of things exists in all the goitrous districts which we have visited, and we should hesitate but little in venturing the opinion that the same holds true in every part of the world where goitre is known."

The following are the general conclusions at which Dr. T. has arrived, from the facts and reasoning set forth in his report:—

"1. That goitre exists, in some sections of the State, to the extent of about *one per cent.* of the population, and will, in time, unless proper measures are adopted to prevent it, assume an endemic form.

"2. This disease being confined principally to the older geological formations of the State, it will, in all probability, never prevail to any considerable extent in the more recent systems.

"3. That the cause of goitre is pretty certainly traced to the character of the water used in the infected districts.

"4. There is strong reason to believe from the observations of M. Chatin, and the scarcity of iodine in goitrous districts, that the disease is not produced by any positive agent, but has its origin from the want of a due amount of iodine in the waters of said districts.

"5. That goitre is not found in regions where the waters are impregnated with an appreciable quantity of iodine; hence it will never exist, to any considerable degree, in the tertiary and cretaceous systems, nor the coal meadows of our State, since iodine is abundantly diffused throughout these formations.

"6. Iodine is the remedy, in the treatment of goitre; and this fact, under the circumstances, is strong corroborative evidence that the disease originates from the want of that agent; and if the absence of iodine is the cause of bronchocele, it is but reasonable to expect that great good may be obtained by impregnating with it the water used as drink, as a prophylactic measure in goitrous districts. May not the remedy in time become as certain a preventive of goitre as vaccination is of smallpox.

"7. Iodine does not seem to form any chemical combination with the blood, nor with any of its elements; but seems to impart something to the system—the lymphatic system especially—necessary to the maintenance of its healthy functions.

"8. Surgery has done but little for the relief of the goitrous patient. Extirpation has been attempted, with unfavourable results; it is now totally abandoned by the profession. The seton has been resorted to with limited success. The formation of an abscess in the tumour has, in some instances, resulted in a spontaneous cure; tying the thyroidal arteries has also been attended with partial success.

"9. Certain gum resins are applied externally in South America, and also in some parts of the republic of Central America, with reputed efficacy."

Besides the regular reports from the several counties of the State; that on goitre, noticed above; a report on the botany of Wilcox County; reports on the number and character of the physicians of Dallas and Bibb counties, the volume of *Transactions* before us contains an account of a case of distorted pelvis, in which abdominal section was practised, followed by death from nervous shock; another of leucorrhœa in an infant twenty months old; a paper on the unity of disease, by Dr. H. Backus, and one on the pathological relations of the organic nervous system, by Dr. M. Troy. These last two, though highly creditable productions, and not devoid of a certain degree of interest, are out of place, in our opinion, in the *Transactions* of a State Medical Society, the communications to which should be confined, as much as possible, to a record of the personal observations of its members on the several questions connected with the pathology and treatment of the diseases prevailing in their respective localities, whether as endemics or epidemics, with a comparison, it may be, of their own observations and conclusions with those already recorded by others.

2. The *Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania*, at its annual session of 1854, in their intrinsic value and general interest fall far short of those of former years. It is with surprise and deep regret that we perceive that in so small a portion of the counties the medical profession is represented at the sessions of the State Society, and that of those represented, so few present full and satisfactory reports, as a contribution to the common stock of medical knowledge. To what cause this apathy to the best interests of the profession, this neglect to perform what should be considered a pleasing task as well as a positive duty, is to be attributed, we pretend not to determine. It is to be hoped, however, that efforts will be made to effect, at an early date, a complete organization of the regular physicians in every county in the State; and that, when such an organization is accomplished, a full representation from each county will be found in attendance at the yearly meetings of the State Society, prepared to report on the character, causes, and usual course of the diseases that occur in the several sections of country included within their respective limits, and the plans of treatment which experience has shown to be most successful in conducting them to a favourable termination. A very common excuse offered by physicians residing in the interior of the State, remote from any large town or densely settled neighbourhood, for their neglect to become active members of the medical society of their county, is the little leisure which the hard labour

and constant travelling of a country practitioner leaves him, even to attend the meetings of the Society, much less to communicate to it in writing, the results of his observations and experience in relation to the several cases of disease which fall under his notice. That in some cases, the country physician may not be able, without a very great sacrifice, or very considerable inconvenience, to attend regularly the meetings of his county society, we can readily suppose;—we must, however, insist that the advantages to be derived from such attendance, will, in nearly every instance, amply repay the sacrifice and inconvenience it occasions. But we cannot admit the plea of want of time and opportunity as a valid excuse, on the part of any physician, for not recording his personal observations on the diseases he is called upon to treat, and his experience in reference to their proper treatment. Short, pertinent, and accurate notes are all that is required; for the recording of which an opportunity may be found amidst the occupations and cares of the most extensive and wide-spread practice—without interfering in the slightest degree with the duties the physician owes to his patients, or encroaching upon the time necessary for his rest and refreshment. Were such notes to be furnished, by even a majority of the members of a county society, to the committee appointed to draw up its annual report to the State Society, we should no longer be under the necessity of hearing the constantly recurring and mortifying apology for the incompleteness of these reports, the want of the materials requisite to furnish a complete and accurate medical history of the county for the years they embrace.

The annual address by the president, Dr. John P. Hiester, of Reading, is on the means of suppressing the evils of quackery.

We entirely coincide in opinion with Dr. Hiester, that these evils can never be totally eradicated, even under what may be considered the most efficient means, and by the wisest and most persevering efforts. All that we can reasonably expect to attain, is to bring the evil under wholesome restraint.

One of the leading means for staying the evils of quackery in our midst, is the cultivation by the profession of everything calculated to increase its legitimate influence with the public. By the proper organization of its members, with the view of insisting upon the moral and educational qualifications of all who would enter its ranks, and their strict adherence, subsequently, to a code of ethics, clearly defining their duties to the community generally, to their patients, and to each other. Let the entire profession raise itself to its proper standard in education, scientific attainments, and skill; in moral worth and gentlemanly deportment. Let its members be truly united among themselves; banishing all petty jealousy, and every mean art of rivalry, and prepared mutually to defend each other's rights and interests, and a more effectual barrier we shall have erected against the progress and encroachments of quackery than can be expected from penal enactments, the shafts of ridicule, or the most convincing arguments addressed to the public ear.

We agree with Dr. Hiester, as to the beneficial results to be anticipated from a general diffusion, through the medium of our public and private schools, and by popular courses of lectures to the members of the several institutes and lyceums of our towns and cities, of a knowledge of the structure and functions of the human body, and the laws of health and disease deducible from such knowledge; though we are not so sanguine as he is, that by this means a "radical remedy" to quackery will be put in operation. The adaptation of therapeutic agents to meet the various and varying conditions of disease, can never be understood by those out of the profession; and the cunning, intelligent quack, and we have, unfortunately, such in our midst, will base the success of his nostrums upon this very ignorance, let a general knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and pathology be ever so widely diffused.

The reports contained in the present volume of *Transactions* bear testimony to the very general exemption from disease, especially of an epidemic character, enjoyed by the entire State.

Although the question of the relationship of particular diseases to different geological formations has, as yet, not been examined with any degree of care, yet, so far as any notice is taken of it in the reports before us, it is very evident, in relation to the dysentery, at least, that it may prevail to as great an extent upon the limestone, as on the gravel, or old red sandstone, contrary to the inference derived from the statements presented in some of the reports of former years.

The diseases that prevailed most extensively during the year 1853, in those portions of the State from which reports are presented, were dysentery, typhoid fever, rheumatism, mumps, hooping-cough, and erysipelas.

In Logan's Valley, Blair County, Dr. T. M. Confer reports the prevalence of mumps to have been more extensive than for many years previously.

"Its first appearance was in the early part of December, and, by the end of the month, some two hundred persons had suffered from it. These were generally the young, between the ages of two and thirteen years. Some few cases were met with in adults. It was carried from the public schools, and so generally distributed, that every family in the township was visited by it. In three cases that I noticed, the glands were suppurated. This process was confined to the superficial integuments, and over not more than one gland in the same patient. Many of the cases were attended with violent fever and delirium, continuing for two and four days, and requiring an active antiphlogistic treatment. Several experienced a second attack, though with less violence than the first. These were adults, having large families, and being constantly exposed. Some few cases of metastasis were noticed; three to the testes, and one to the brain. This latter case occurred in a scrofulous subject, who had glandular enlargement previous to the attack of parotitis. The inflammation passed gradually from the salivary glands to the mucous coat of the eye on the same side, then to the opposite eye, and finally to the brain; when it terminated fatally in five days and a half, notwithstanding every application was made use of to invite back the disease to its original location, and to arrest its progress in the brain.

"In one of the cases of metastasis to the testes, suppuration took place, and by the neglect of the patient to make known his real situation to his parents, the left testicle was destroyed by the suppurating process." "When first seen, the part was discharging profusely, and the suppurative process, for a time, seemed to threaten the extinction of the opposite testicle. This condition of things finally yielded to an appropriate treatment, and the patient was restored to health, with the loss of one testicle."

"The suppurating process in parotitis, which, we believe, is of rare occurrence, is generally superficial, seldom extending further than the integuments, which must render this case one of singular interest; yet we believe it may be accounted for by the exposure of the patient to cold, and the fatigues of labour, the friction of his clothing, combined with the accumulated filth, acting as constant sources of irritation to the inflamed gland."

In the Report from the Medical Society of Berks County, we find the following statement:—

"Dr. Greis mentioned, at the last meeting of our County Society, that he regards erysipelas as almost entirely a constitutional affection, and that he so treats the disease; after having evacuated the bowels with a mercurial purge, he restores the secretions by the use of the *ammoniated tartrate of iron*, in the dose of grs. viij, every four hours; and if much prostration exists, every two hours. From its ready solubility and palatable taste, it forms an excellent preparation for children, and, according to the doctor's experience, is more efficacious than the muriated tincture of iron."

A most interesting communication occurs in connection with the report of the Medical Society of Montgomery. It presents the detail of a number of cases of erysipelas occurring in children subsequent to vaccination, by Dr. Hiram Corson. These cases are certainly of a very strange character. Several of them, in connection with the local disease, which made its first appearance in the neighbourhood of the part at which the vaccine virus had been inserted, presented a series of symptoms indicative of a serious affection of the brain and upper portion of the spinal cord. Unfortunately, no *post-mortem* examination was made in either of the fatal cases. Of the true cause of the erysipelatous attack in Dr. Corson's cases we can form no accurate opinion. Excepting, perhaps, as a mere exciting cause of disease in subjects otherwise predisposed, we cannot suppose the vaccination to have had any agency in its production. Thirty-one children in the same neighbourhood were vaccinated with the same matter. Of these, eight only were attacked with erysipelas; and of these eight, five died.

"The last fourteen of the children," remarks Dr. C., "were vaccinated on the mild days preceding twelve days of northwesterly wind, which occurred in March last, beginning on the 25th, and continuing without intermission, until the last of April. This was a remarkable spell of weather; the wind never shifted, but continued steadily to blow for twelve days; was very dry and cold.

"On the very day on which this change to cold began, one child, then only vaccinated two days, was seized with convulsions. On the next day, or rather on the night of the second day, three others sickened, of whom two died. On the next day, another sickened in the morning, and died at 11 P.M. On the following day, two others began to be affected with erysipelas of the arm; one of whom died at the expiration of two weeks from the time of vaccination, and all sickened during the continuance of the cold weather.

"At the time those children were vaccinated, I was attending a woman who had been ill with erysipelas since the 14th of February, supervening on a small injury of the toe-nail, and which had involved the foot and leg almost to the knee, when I was called in; and finally involved the whole thigh, suppuration taking place deeply, throughout the whole limb; and it is only now, May 1, fairly free from the discharge of matter. This was the only case of erysipelas within my town until April 15, and was one mile distant from the nearest of these cases, and two miles from many of them.

"On the 3d of April, a child next door to two of the patients, aged nine months (female), was scalded on the arm, and slightly on the neck. On the 14th, those scalds were nearly well, and erysipelas began to show itself on the very crown of the head, from whence it spread rapidly, involving, in two or three days, the whole scalp and nose, with portions of the cheeks. Used mercurial oint. and mur. tinct. of iron. Recovered. I also attended several other small children, in the region about, suffering with slight catarrh, with thin, green, watery stools. But all of them recovered save one very small, weak twin, four and a half months old.

"I have been informed by my friend and neighbour, Dr. Samuel Smith, that, during the illness of these children, he was called to a child of only a few months old, with sickness, green stools, and other symptoms similar to those which existed in the small children mentioned by myself; that in four or five hours after the invasion of sickness, erysipelas showed itself on the point of the nose, and spread rapidly; and the child died in nine hours from the time of its attack, with symptoms of disease of the brain. This case was two miles from any of mine.

"That the matter was pure and good, I have not the least doubt; for a great majority of those vaccinated took the disease well. In two instances, when two children of the same family were alone vaccinated, in each case one took the erysipelas. The disease was severe almost always in proportion as the child was young, and milder as it had more age; and yet, some of the quite young ones escaped, whilst some of even five and six years took the disease."

While the majority of the reports embraced in the present volume of *Transactions* contain much matter of an interesting and valuable character, the most complete and satisfactory of the series is unquestionably the one from the Medical Society of the County of Philadelphia. We have, however, already extended the present notice to too great a length, to permit us to enter upon an examination of the facts and observations it presents in relation to the more prevalent diseases of the period it includes.

3. The volume of *Transactions of the Medical Association of Southern Central New York* contains the history of a few cases of disease which are not devoid of interest, but no report presenting any prominent facts and observations demanding especial notice. But two reports, properly speaking, appear, in fact, to have been made at the session whose transactions are here detailed; namely, one from the Committee on Surgery, from Chemung County, and the other from the Committee on Endemics and Epidemics, of Tompkins County; neither of them very full or satisfactory.

The annual address by the President of the Association, Dr. Frederick Hyde, is a creditable production, and appropriate to the mixed audience before which it was delivered. Its main topic is the importance of every one acquiring a correct knowledge of the human physical organization, and the vital laws by which that organization is governed; in order that each individual may be enabled to pursue a plan of treatment, which shall encourage a healthful development of all its powers, and preserve them in their full and vigorous exercise for the longest period, thus securing his or her own comfortable existence, and the transmission of a perfect organism to his or her offspring. In the close of the address, are set forth the paramount claims of legitimate medical science as carried into practice by the well-instructed and conscientious physician to public confidence and protection. Both themes are judiciously treated, and strongly enforced.

An Essay on Opium and the Sulphate of Quinia as Remedial Agents, by Dr. Nelson Nivison, demands but a passing notice. To believe the writer, these two articles, in varying doses, either separately or conjointly administered, and appropriately timed, are of themselves adapted to the arrest of fevers, inflammations, and a host of other diseases—that there is scarcely, indeed, "any species of disease in which, either primarily or secondarily, in some stages of its progress," either one or both of these remedies cannot be made to subserve important purposes.

All that Dr. N. advances, in general terms, may be strictly correct, and yet we fear that, neither in principle nor in practice, the views he inculcates in the essay under consideration, will be found to advance in any great degree our acquaintance with the therapeutical application of either of the remedial agents indicated.

An Essay on Medical Education, by Dr. Daniel Holmes, breathes the true spirit, and utters correct sentiments on this all-important subject. A subject we are pleased to find that is attracting the notice of our State and local societies—for it is through their influence and co-operation alone, that any reform in medical education can be effected. Let the members of the profession throughout the Union unite in the demand for the requisite qualifications in those who enter into its ranks. Let them carefully point out to their pupils the nature and extent of those qualifications, and conscientiously aid them in the means for their attainments, by personal instruction, and by affording them every opportunity for the study of disease within their reach, and finally, when prepared to profit by a course of medical lectures, preparatory to graduation, to indicate to them the institution best adapted to complete the thorough course of instruction commenced under the private preceptor's guidance. Let this be done, and the desired reform in medical education will be speedily accomplished; but not until then.

Dr. Holmes presents some pertinent remarks on the deficiencies of the clinical instruction afforded to the medical student in this country.

4. At the Session of 1854, of the *Medical Society of the State of North Carolina,* the subject of the annual address by the President, Dr. J. B. Jones, was, "The manner of man's relation to some of the many destructive agents by which his existence is often terminated." His views on this subject will be understood from the following paragraph, which occurs at an early part of the address:—

"But for his nervous system, and the connate objects of its control, man would escape the injurious or fatal action of all that class of agents from which the vegetable world suffers no inconvenience. This fact plainly declares that nerve is the medium through which he is placed in relation with by far the majority of morbific causes. We read accounts of primary lesions of the blood, secretion, &c., in which accurate descriptions of these changes are given. But if the blood is a vital fluid, as dependent upon innervation for its normal properties, as nerve matter is upon blood for stimulus and supply, a lesion of innervation is a necessary element in the definition of lesions of the blood."

"Poisonous and morbific agents," according to Dr. Jones, "produce death or disease by their action primarily upon the nervous system." Before he closes he admits, however, that the action of all morbific agents cannot be accounted for in this manner. Thus, he says:—

"Any substance entering the blood, and impairing or destroying the integrity of one or more of its constituent elements, impairs, or robs, to a corresponding extent, the organs which are dependent upon such product for their existence and functional capacity; and this is no doubt the mode of relation between individual structures and some poisons and therapeutic agents."

The second article in the volume, is a long address in opposition to the commonly received doctrine of malaria as a cause of disease—chiefly, however, in reply to some strictures of Dr. Satchwell, on a former address on the same subject, by Dr. Charles E. Johnson, the author of the present article.

The address, though in many respects an able one, presents no new facts or arguments bearing upon the subject discussed, and is not, in our opinion, suited to the *Transactions* of a State Medical Society. Positive contributions to medical science, derived from the personal observations and investigations of the members of the several county societies, digested and arranged by competent committees, are what we look for in these *Transactions;* and we are very properly disappointed, when we find, in place of these, theoretical disquisitions leading to no positive results.

A short letter from Dr. James J. Philips follows, On the importance to the physician of the study of the standard medical works that issue from the press, and of the valuable contributions to be found on the pages of our professional journals.

The volume closes with "An account of some of the early proceedings of the Society, and the Code of Ethics of the National Association." D. F. C.

Art. XVI.—*Reports of American Institutions for the Insane.*

1. *Of the Mt. Hope Institution,* for the years 1849, 1850, 1851, 1852, and 1853.
2. *Of the Vermont Asylum,* for the years 1852 and 1853.
3. *Of the Maryland Hospital,* for the year 1852.
4. *Of the South Carolina Asylum,* for the year 1852.
5. *Of the Louisiana State Asylum,* for the years 1849-50, and 1850-51.
6. *Of the Butler Hospital,* for the year 1853.

1. The Mount Hope Institution, near Baltimore, is the largest and one of the most successful of what can properly be termed the *private* establishments for the insane, in the United States. The principle upon which it is conducted, as represented in the report for 1849, is truly benevolent. It "has never obtained from the city or State the smallest pecuniary assistance, or from individual benevolence the slightest endowment," yet, "whilst burdened with a heavy debt, it appropriates one-fifth of its room to the maintenance of destitute lunatics." Persons of all religious persuasions are admitted, and participate "on an equal footing in all its benefits."

	Men.	Women.	Total.
Insane patients, January 1, 1849	21	38	59
Admitted in course of the year	45	41	86
Whole number	66	79	145
Discharged, including deaths	38	32	70 [1]
Remaining, January 1, 1850	26	48	74
Of those discharged, there were cured	19	13	32
Died	8	6	14
Cases of *mania-à-potu*, January 1, 1849	3	0	3
Admitted in course of the year	77	11	88
Discharged, recovered	75	11	86
Died	3	0	3
Remaining, January 1, 1850	2	0	2

The special condition resulting in death, in the cases of insanity, is not mentioned.

---

[1] There are some discrepancies in these figures which a reviewer cannot correct.